Unable to go it alone: Re-stating the case for a strengthened English/Media relationship

Media and English have been sister subjects ever since F R Leavis promoted a version of what has since been dubbed the 'inoculation' approach to media: the development of critical close reading skills in school students to protect them from the ill effects of the mass media, which in Leavis's view were cultural effects (cf Leavis and Thompson, 1933).

Most media teachers in the UK would not now subscribe to any form of protectionism, taking instead a positive view of young people's media cultures and practices, not least because of a general shift towards forms of creative production enabled by the increasing availability of digital authoring tools. This chapter takes such a stance for granted, while retaining the critical edge which traditions of media pedagogy routinely emphasise.

In relation to the English curriculum, two polarised arguments have developed over the history of media education. One of these is the argument Media Education merits its own curriculum space, and that its distinctive features are diluted by a merger with English. Whatever the strengths or weaknesses of this argument in relation to subject content or pedagogic tradition, a serious practical issue is the risk that the media education dimension is invariably subordinate to the English element. This set of arguments is explored by Buckingham in conversation with one of the authors of this chapter (Buckingham, 2019) which seeks to explore the idea that while there are some discomforting problems for media educators presented by this relationship, in many ways, locating media within English is the "least worst" option in terms of a curricular home.

The opposing argument is that Media and English belong together, an argument supported pragmatically in the UK by the embedding of media within English in some versions of the National Curriculum. This is the view we will pursue in this chapter, building on earlier work of ours, such as Burn, Franks and Durran (2006) which argued for a triple alliance of English, Media and Drama; and Connolly (2018) which pointed out the illogicality of turning away from quite highly developed models of English which incorporated the study of the media. In today's landscape, two main areas of congruence may be identified.

The first is to be found in conceptions of literacy. Extensions of the concept of literacy into multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996), multimodal literacy (Jewitt and Kress, 2003), and media literacy (Buckingham 2003; Burn and Durran, 2007) indicate shared territory across the two domains. Here, literacy can productively be seen as a capacity to critically engage with cultures of communication, to employ communicative practices to understand and interpret texts of all kinds, including literary and media texts; and to employ such practices to create new texts. An example is provided by Partington (Partington & Buckingham, 2011), working with his Year 8 English group to look at the grammatical notion of person in a Harry Potter narrative, scrutinising book, film and videogame versions, which each use a differently-constructed form of third person narrative. The implication of this study and others like it is to pose the question of what kind of model of literacy we might need to understand how children engage with the narrative of Harry Potter across these three media?

The example also indicates that such a question, and the pedagogic solutions it demands, make common cause across English and Media education – neither is well-positioned to address it alone.

However, the literacy argument may be extended into the related area of oracy. Burn suggests, following Ong's well-known concept of secondary orality (1982) that practices of literacy and oracy combine in certain circumstances in the field of new media (such as the fluid processes of filming, or the speechlike texts employed in online communication and games), meriting the portmanteau term "lit-oracy" (Burn, 2009). Accordingly, one of the examples explored in this chapter will consider what forms of oracy are developed in a project on a cross-media advertising campaign.

The second is to be found in pedagogic models of Arts education. In this sense, English and Media education, insofar as they can be constructed as Arts subjects in relation to the literary arts and the media arts, share common interests: in narrative, aesthetics, creativity, adaptation and transmedia storytelling. However, the picture here is more complicated for two reasons: firstly because "English" also contains Drama within its remit, at least in certain phases; secondly because the logic here is to make common cause also with other sister arts in, for example, visual design and music. In relation to this argument, we include in this chapter an example of GCSE English students making videogames based on Macbeth, and consider what benefits may accrue from interrogating a Shakespeare text from the perspective of videogame design.

Before we present these examples, we should observe that meeting such challenges seems difficult in a time at which so much of the curriculum in England, at least, appears to be looking backwards, rather than looking forward. The 2014 iteration of the National Curriculum for English appears to want to "lockdown" the subject to some fairly limited definitions of what constitutes criticality, analysis and indeed, culture more widely. Fuller explanations of this limitation process (Connolly, 2018) than can be reproduced here, are available, but suffice to say there is clearly something of a reduction process (Wrigley, 2019) going on which is about making outcomes easier to measure. A focus on the metalanguage of grammar, rote learning of poetry and an emphasis on fluency in decoding over comprehension all point towards an English curriculum in which boundaries seem to be hardening rather than being blurred.

We would argue then, that some of what we are proposing requires a change in the way that curriculum is thought about per se. At the time of writing, OFSTED (the English school's inspectorate) is piloting a new inspection framework which appears to prioritise curriculum over outcomes. Whether or not this change of emphasis has any real effect on how schools enact their curriculum in English – or in any other subject – remains to be seen, but what is clear is that a curriculum which repositions media texts at the heart of English needs to be theorised in a particular way. In order to do this, we would draw upon the work of critical realist academics who have written extensively about curriculum, most notably, Allan Luke and Zyonghi Deng. For these thinkers, things like technology, student experience, creativity and epistemic humility are all essential when thinking about the way that the English curriculum might move beyond some of its current limitations.

For Deng and Luke, the question what counts as subject matter in any school-based discipline relies upon a broad conception of knowledge and skills. Problem solving, process skills,

mastery of technology and a distinction between what can and cannot be learnt through scientific method are all integral elements of a subject discipline (Deng and Luke, 2008; Luke 2008). This kind of broad conception is writ large in the relationship between English media and particularly the growth models of English proposed by John Dixon and others (Dixon, 1975). In these models, the English curriculum is responsive and agile, adapting to the changing nature of what constitutes knowledge in the world outside the classroom. We want to suggest in this chapter, that our view of English and media is built on seeing knowledge in this way; other conceptions of curriculum ("knowledge rich", social realist etc.) will not allow for the kind of boundary-muddling, tension-exploring conception of the relationship between the two areas we outline here. Many of the topics we discuss here from within the fields of English and media do not, and indeed cannot, have any fixed epistemological value to them. They involve notions of cultural value, canonicity and personal and public subjectivities, as we discuss below.

We see the return to a traditionally narrow English curriculum as a kind of centripetal force driving significant elements of literacy, creativity and perspective to the margins of the subject. We should be clear here that we are not rejecting this narrowing simply because we don't like it, but because our work has proposed very clear models of both curriculum and classroom learning which have sought to define how these marginalised elements work and what they look like in the classroom (Burn & Durran, 2007; Connolly & Readman, 2017). To use Mikhail Bakhtin's term (Bakhtin, 1981) , we believe that school English is a heteroglossia, a rich tapestry of voices, perspectives and subjectivities which skilled teachers need to unpack alongside their students. Attempts to narrow the subject through limited canons, prescriptive lists of grammatical terms and a denial of the role of technology in literacy all serve to disintegrate the nature of English, when it is in fact, integrative. The acknowledgement of English as a "dissident paradigm", creating multimodal challenges to received knowledge, is not unique to our thinking; it is evident in the work of Jacques Derrida (1992) and more recently arguments about the nature of the canon in relation to the subject (Belas & Hopkins, 2019)

TWO CASE STUDIES

Here then, we present two case studies which explore the potential relationships between English and media in more detail. All three offer classroom based examples of the way that the edges of both English and Media might be deliberately blurred and challenge some of the limitations and prejudices outlined above. We do not offer these case studies as part of some proposed model curriculum, but rather as a means of demonstrating the integrative nature of English and how it might be interdependent on media.

ADVERTISING, AUDIENCES AND ORACY

Whilst there has been some removal of the emphasis on oracy in the secondary curriculum (most notably via the decision to not weight it in GCSE English examinations) it is still given significant weight in the National Curriculum and all other models of English teaching. One of the most important advantages of the relationship between media and English is the opportunity it provides for constructive talk and the development of oracy skills. The data

presented in this case study explores the way that study of media texts and practices promotes a particular kind of oracy – in this case the ability to talk about both one's own perspective and to consider the perspective of others by considering the relationship between text, production and audience. This section discusses some work done by a group of Year 11 (15 & 16 year olds) students who are studying both GSCE English and Media, and was collected as part of a larger, long term project about Media literacy. Other aspects of this larger project included thinking about teacher and pupil media cultures (Burn et al., 2010;) teaching key media concepts (Powell, 2014) and media literacy work with very young children (Connolly & Parry, 2018)

The simulation has long been a tool used by media teachers for exploring the relationship between media audiences and media industry (Grahame, 1990) and the activity used in our unit of work here – the cross-media information campaign designed to help stop the spread of flu – would be familiar to many teachers in its design and intention. Students were asked to think about the media texts they would create for different audiences in order to contribute to the simulated advertising campaign. This work was done in groups , with each group being allocated a different audience and each group then pitching their ideas to a group of "experts" – in this case an invited audience of adults from within the school – who would decide whether or not the students pitch had been "successful".

There is no doubt that the simulation as a pedagogic tool has many merits, the most notable of which is its ability to get students to think themselves into the position of audiences other than themselves. However, an analysis of the pitches presented by each group in the Year 11 cohort raises some questions about the way both teachers and students perceive the concept of audience, and the kinds of oracy such perceptions result in.

Take for example, the following comments made by a member of a group who were targeting teenagers with their flu awareness message for the information campaign. Here they are explaining to the "expert panel" why they want to have a flash-mob style advertising event using a song written for the campaign, which will go viral on social media

The reason that we're keen to do a live performance is that like the T Mobile adverts which you've probably seen on TV, although it is one main event, other people will video it and then that creates more free publicity for us because they can then post that on to other websites such as Facebook, Youtube and so on. With the live performances, because we don't want the message to get confused with other songs by the artist, we've concentrated on just doing that one song. So everyone here will only hear that song. Connected to the videos, what we're intending to do on Facebook and other social networking sites is to put keywords to a message about the easiest ways to get the flu jab…so that every time the video's looked at the message will also be on the side telling them about the ways that they can stop themselves getting it (the flu) as well as "Catch it, bin it, kill it"

This quite detailed explanation attracts a number of responses from the adults on the panel. The simplest, but most provocative of which is "What's YouTube?". The respondent, a male member of staff in his fifties, is being deliberately disingenuous, but he is making the point that, although the students pitch is aimed at teenagers, some of the people who hold the

power in terms of deciding what gets seen and what doesn't may be older and less familiar with social media.

This instance of "thinking about audiences" suggests a number of problematic things about simulations, and not only this one. Taking a step back from this situation, it is worth thinking about the different "layers" of conceptual meaning that are running parallel here. At one level, the students have been asked to consider how the creation of a media product –in this case an advertising campaign – might appeal to a specific audience. However, this conception of audience is mediated by a number of other factors; firstly, the teacher's or adult's idea of the audience that the students are trying to reach is probably quite idealised -encapsulated in the idea of a "super-audience" (Connolly, 2013), perhaps augmented by the teachers own personally remembered experience of being an audience member, or their experience as a parent of someone in the intended audience) and thus, perhaps not really like an authentic audience at all. Secondly, the student's own experience of the audience being targeted, again, perhaps as a member of that audience. Finally, the conception might also be mediated by any theoretical material to which the student and teachers have access, and the way that this impacts on the simulation itself. Imagine for a moment that the teacher introduces his or her students to some of the psychographic groupings sometimes used by marketers and advertisers. While this knowledge does have some value, the simulation might be influenced by a student or teacher's deliberate attempt to shoehorn the students own experience of audiences and those generated by the simulation itself into these groupings; again, providing another layer of mediation to the concept of audience generated by the activity. These layers of meaning and perspective are constantly being dissected and probed by the discussion between the students and each other (in groups), their teacher, and the other adults invited in as an expert group. The simulation is, in effect, promoting the kind of sophisticated heteroglossia we outlined in our introduction.

In the exchange above, this complexity is evident, with those in the simulation remarking on the fact that viral advertising works on its intended audience on many different levels . Here, within the limits of the simulation, the students are navigating these different mediations of the concept; thinking about their position as audience members in their own right, but also shifting between different audience positions – with perhaps not all of them being entirely "authentic".

The nature of talk is integral here to the development of this perspectival understanding. A detailed teacher response to the student idea articulated above demonstrates this:

I think we liked their presentation because what we came away with was fun….the song…learning. But what I think you might find is that some teenagers come away with the chorus and not learn anything.. so you walk away with "Catch it Bin it Kill it", but would you be able to recognise the symptoms?... The more in depth information is missing and so when you talk about having a celebrity on the campaign, we want to know that, as part of the contract, how you're going to be giving more in-depth information. The second group had a leaflet that would come to the mother…then the mother has what she needs to look out for

with illness and all that. Whereas you might have teenagers coming away with the song and the rhythm and the rhyme and the chorus and nothing else.

Much of this is interrogatory (Wells, 2009) teacher talk. This should not , however, be seen as being about the teacher simply asking questions. As Browne (2009) identifies, such teacher talk needs to be "supportive and encouraging to children in their use of language and intervene in children's talk only when it is appropriate"(p.7). Similarly, Alexander (2012) and others (Coultas 2010: Mercer & Dawes, 2010) have sought to highlight the need for effective teacher management of classroom talk for it to promote higher level conceptual learning. Alexander (2012:p.3) complains that much classroom talk involves asking questions "that test children's thinking but don't actually foster it*"*, but we propose that the teachers' use of questioning here, rather than being seen as an inappropriate interrogatory intervention, encourages speculation and argument which allow for plurality in the explanations of the concept of audience - something suggested by another example of teacher talk:

"We thought the idea was fantastic. You've used the social media, keywords, search engines…its personalised and you have a great awareness of popular culture….if the content of the video tells you all about symptoms, flu jab, it does all of that"

One interesting thing with this example is that conceptual vocabulary is not necessarily presented in a didactic or explanatory way – it is more reminiscent of Rogoff's "judicious use of speech" (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009: p.117) with the teacher familiarising the student with not only what needs to be done – in this case, the production of the advertising campaign – but also how to talk about what needs to be done. Furthermore recent evidence presented by Alexander (2017) suggests that the establishment of this kind of talk, where there are clear principles which guide the dialogue and the subsequent adoption of this kind of dialogic talk across the curriculum can produce substantial improvements in conceptual understanding. Indeed, we would suggest that many of the positive outcomes in this Year 11 class were due to the widespread use of these sorts of principles.

Additionally though, the position of knowledgeable authority constructed here, helps the pupils to progress by reframing the raw materials of their responses using that vocabulary, and so validating and refining what they say before returning it back to them in a form which allows them to talk about what they discovered in that conceptual vocabulary. Connolly and Parry (2013) use the term "conceptual oscillation" to describe this movement in dialogue which allows for thinking about moving conceptually between an understanding of the media text as an industrial product, to one of the text as social object. We would argue here that, the critical vocabulary in the teachers response (search engine, popular culture, keywords) allows the pupil to move between thinking about a text as "something that I watch or read" to "something to be studied" . This oscillation from unfixed meaning to fixed meaning could be compared to the use of socio-dramatic play in early childhood. The child plays at being a 'nurse' working with their existing assumptions of what a nurse might do. Through play with peers, dealing with new fictional issues and engagement with resources and with the teacher the child's ideas about being a nurse may have to be adapted to accommodate new knowledge and perspectives. It seems to us that by adopting 'professional' roles (researchers and advertisers) the children are similarly both exploring and then developing their understanding but as demonstrated above the role of the teacher in augmenting knowledge and challenging working assumptions is critical to progression. There are parallels here with

Connolly's (2013) observations about the way that secondary school students learn to make media texts by moving from what he terms "antithetical" knowledge and experiences to "orthodox" ones, though interestingly here, the movement appears to be much more dependent on well-managed teacher talk.

Looking at the contrast between each of these interactions we were increasingly aware of a need to allow for oscillation in dialogue, enabling teacher and pupils to argue from the point of view of different perspectives. This was made possible by the physical presence in the room of a group of adults alongside the teacher and this acted as a scaffold enabling the children to continue to imagine a group of young people without reverting to cliché or stereotype. Here then, the classroom talk had a twofold function, allowing both for the development of in depth articulate oral exchanges between adults and young people, as well as greater conceptual understanding of the notion of a concept like audience.

VIDEOGAMES: LUDIC LITERATURE AND EXPANSIVE NARRATIVES

The case study explored here is of two Year 10 students in a UK comprehensive school making videogames based on Macbeth, which they are studying for GCSE. The games are made using the Missionmaker game authoring tool, which allows users to rapidly create complex 3D worlds using pre-designed assets, and populate them with characters, objects, pickups and media objects such as text popups or audio, including dialogue. The events in the game are created using a simple coding interface to make rules determining conditions under which such events will be triggered. The software is designed by the MAGiCAL Projects team at UCL, and has been used for a variety of literature-related projects (see Burn, 2017; Coles & Bryer, 2018; de Paula et al, 2017; Anderson & Cameron, 2017). The general argument across this literature makes a number of points about the use of games in relation to the English, Media and Drama curriculum cluster. Firstly, that games as a storytelling medium are a cognate cultural form with literature and film. Secondly, that they allow aspects of literary narrative to be understood in new ways, productively unsettling conventional approaches to narrative in education (though in many ways also supporting and extending them). Third, that they are a multimodal form, requiring practitioners' models of literacy to be extended into the realms of spoken language, visual design, dramatic action, among others. In this sense they also have the potential to build bridges between not only English, Media and Drama, but with other sister Arts subjects. Finally, the coding element of game design provides a link with the computing curriculum, prompting some interesting questions both for teachers of computing and for teachers of English. What might it mean to "code" Shakespeare, for example? In multimodal theories of game semiotics, coding has been seen as an additional mode: for Burn, an orchestrating mode which organises other modes (actional, visual, musical, linguistic, etc) in the game (Burn, 2017); for Hawreliak, a procedural mode, building on Bogost's influential notion of procedural rhetoric (Hawreliak, 2019; Bogost, 2010).

The argument in this section is mostly focused on aspects of narrative, and how it might be expanded, through the students game designs, and in their conceptual grasp of what narrative and its attendant categories of character, location, time and space, might mean.

Expansive Narrative

The games produced by these students all, in some way, play with the narrative structures of Macbeth, and by the same token, playfully expand them. This expansion takes specific forms. As we have seen, the whole group has chosen to focus on the initial scenes of the play, and the meeting with the witches. One focus of expansion, then, is to explore the significance of the prophecies. This is how Tom and Millie describe the choices they have constructed for the player in their game:

> M: the idea was that they would start on a heath where Macbeth met the witches and the witches would go off into the different passages here and in each passage there would be um an object which told you of the prophecy and of his fate. And so basically the witches are all supposed to go down into the different ways and you choose a bit where you go - so there's a crown that says basically you'll become king, and then the skull that was signify- symbolising the King's skull and the sword was symbolising the fight and who kills the king, and each passage you went down fulfilled the fate of Macbeth .. oh yeah, this is the one where he would become king, this is the one where he would kill Duncan, and this would be the one where –
>
> T: This says "follow witch on the left to find Macbeth, follow witch in the middle to solve a riddle, follow witch on the right you may get into a fight"….
>
> M: at the end they should all end up in a room and they'd be brewing the cauldron and he would have chosen his fate depending on which way he was going.
>
> If you - Depending on which way you go at the beginning depends on which prophecy you find out about – so if you decide to go to the right it's saying you will find out about bloody things and you will commit murder. And if you go down the middle you find that the king will die who was your loyal friend and you supported him. And if you go down the left it says you find out you become king, which is a nice thing.
>
> T: Like Macbeth's thought process – cos if he thinks about the positives of him becoming king from what the witches tell him then he'll end up with massive ambition, and if he thinks about killing, the death of his good king, he might become fearful and therefore like end up withdrawn and and up having to stab the king because his wife tells him to, or if he goes to the right he might have a bloodlust and end up killing the king just because why not? All of those three ways always bring him to the part which the witches want, which is where the cauldron is. So kind of symbolising his thought process.

So the function of the prophecies in the scene – as brief but intensely significant items of dialogue, prefiguring events that unfold throughout the play – are expanded into narrative sequences in space and time. Exploiting the affordance of digital games to construct narrative choices, the prophecies are transformed into three options for the player. These are realised in the game in four main ways: as mission popups, as corridors leading to the outcome; as symbolic objects representing that outcome; and as a further trajectory to enact the outcome. Each element suggests a particular kind of expansion of the play.

The popups are instructions to the player in a simple poetic form with a rhyme in each case: "follow witch on the left to find Macbeth, follow witch in the middle to solve a riddle, follow witch on the right you may get into a fight"…. These are not direct imitations of the poetic form of the prophecies, which is principally the iambic tetrameter – the students verses are closer to the pentameter - but the witches' incantations are abundant with rhyme, and various kinds of word-patterning are used by Shakespeare to produce the 'supernatural soliciting' of the play, and to echo it in Macbeth's speech (Kranz, 2003).

[FIGURE 8.1]

In the same way, the poetic form of Tom and Millie's game constitutes an echo of this kind of supernatural rhetoric. At the same time, it fulfils a different rhetorical function: that of the mission objective in games. Instructions in games as the prelude to a mission can be delivered in a variety of ways: as (linguistic) text; as a brief cut-scene; or as dialogue from a non-player character, for example. They represent an explicit way to guide the player, and are counterposed to implicit guidance by Gee, in his discussion of Tomb Raider 4, where the player, as Lara Croft, can follow instructions from Professor von Croy, but can only complete the level if she also diverts from his instructions to find underwater treasure (Gee, xxx). Elsewhere in the games made by the students, indirect forms of guidance have been constructed, but here Tom and Millie have chosen the direct form – though this is absolutely consonant with the function of the prophecies in the play.

The next stage is to enter the corridor where the objects can be found. The player reaches a crossroads with three exits, and the objects are found in these pathways. As Millie says:

> - so there's a crown that says basically you'll become king, and then the skull that was signify- symbolising the King's skull and the sword was symbolising the fight and who kills the king …

These representations may seem straightforward enough, but three comments may be made. To begin with, the move from a linguistic mode into a visual one is still noteworthy in the context of an English curriculum which has always been dominated by narrow conceptions of print literacy, even where the literary text in question cannot be fully realised without visual and other modes. This includes examples such as the poems of William Blake, the Child Ballads, the illustrations of countless children's books (and some adult literature, such as Dickens' novels) (see Burn and Nixon, 2005, for a longer discussion of this; and Burn and Kress, 2005). But it becomes particularly significant in relation to dramatic literature. For these plays, as has been noted in earlier chapters, began their lives as working scripts for dramatic entities which could only be fully realised on stage (Coles, xxx). The absurdity of reducing them to language-based literary study in the classroom has been forcefully observed many times (Coles, 2013; Yandell, 2011), and is repudiated in the longstanding tradition of active approaches to Shakespeare perhaps best represented by the legacy of Rex Gibson (Gibson, 1998).

In the case of these games, then, a shift into a visual modality in which central ideas of the play – kingship, murder, combat – can be visually represented – is not to be underestimated.

And as we have suggested, the shift is not only into a visual modality, but into a dramatic one. Drama consists, of course, as a series of multimodal ensembles, framing spoken language, text, dramatic action and gesture, proxemics and other modes within spatial and

temporal patterns. Here, in many ways, the realisation of the play as a game restores its dramatic wholeness: expands the working script of the playtext into a complex dramatic scenario. Although the notion of adaptation is often applied to the use of film versions of Shakespeare in classrooms (Goodwyn, 2004) and could by extension be applied also to games as a way to consider these kinds of transformative work by students, in some ways this is not really an adaptation but a realisation. Nobody would refer to a staged version of a Shakespeare play as an adaptation: rather it would be seen as the natural realisation of the linguistic text – in effect, a dramatic expansion. By the same token, it makes no sense to refer to a film or a game version of the play as an adaptation. The interpretation of the literary text through voice, imagery, dramatic action, and the construction of a fictional world, is accomplishing in many ways what the stage play seeks to achieve.

However, there are differences, depending on the different affordances of film and game. Film unfixes the position of the spectator from her seat in the stalls and produces a mobile point of view, with all the possibilities for view, focalisation, framing, proximity and identification this affords. Meanwhile, Tom and Millie's game takes the point-of-view a degree further, offering control to the player. The multiple strands of the narrative made possible here are powerfully represented by the crossroads structure they have created: a persistent trope in folk culture, a transparent signifier of choice, and a repeated motif in digital games since the days of text-based MUDs, where players might typically encounter a crossroads at midnight, with the subsequent option to go north, south, east or west.

The eventual outcomes of the three pathways are not complete in the draft of the game the students were able to complete in the few hours available on this occasion. However the plan is fairly clear: in each case, the pathway leads to the murder of Duncan, but differently freighted with affect. As Tom explains, the lefthand path, represented by the crown, represents ambition, causing him to kill the king; the middle path, represented by the skull, represents fear, in which he reluctantly kills the king, goaded by his wife; while the righthand path, represented by the sword, represents bloodlust, a different motive again. Tom's explanation indicates their intention to use these player options, instantiated as spatial structures and game objects, to organise different psychological states between which Macbeth fluctuates in the play, but here structured as different outcomes:

> T: Like Macbeth's thought process – cos if he thinks about the positives of him becoming king from what the witches tell him then he'll end up with massive ambition, and if he thinks about killing, the death of his good king, he might become fearful and therefore like end up withdrawn and and having to stab the king because his wife tells him to, or if he goes to the right he might have a bloodlust and end up killing the king just because why not? All of those three ways always bring him to the part which the witches want, which is where the cauldron is. So kind of symbolising his thought process.

The outcomes are physically separated and presented as ludic challenges. In each case, the way is blocked by a gate, which can only be unlocked by the symbolic object, once the player has picked it up. Once through the door, the rudiments of Tom and Millie's design indicate the planned sequence: a pool of spouting blood in one, the figure of Duncan in another, the third still empty. Each outcome, of course, brings Macbeth to the same place, the killing of the king; and after that, leads him to the cave where the witches have gathered to mix the

potion. The events are all designed, then, as foreshadowings of the possibilities in Macbeth's mind.

It might be objected that this attribution of psychology to a dramatic character makes the naïve error of perceiving a fictional character for a 'real' person. Such an objection might be seen as an instance of the longstanding debate about the relation between literary theory and school literature pedagogy, in which the constructedness of literary texts was opposed to liberal humanist conceptions of literature (eg Eagleton, 1996; Peim, 1993). A similar imperative has always been central to approaches to media texts in the traditions of media education pedagogy.

One response could be that this once fierce debate has lost some of its force in the "post-theory" moment (eg McQuillan et al, 1999). The question of what English teachers – and media and drama teachers – might hope for in their students understanding of narrative in this moment is both complex and contested, and we have no space here to review it. Our aim is not to prescribe what understandings might be sought, but rather to promote complex understandings, adequate to the nuance and ambiguity of these texts. Such complexity seems to demand that students do indeed see the constructedness of literary, dramatic and mediated narratives – to see, in Shakespeare's terms, that "All the world's a stage"; that Macbeth is "a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage". But at the same time to appreciate the emotions expressed in the text: what the philosopher of film, Noel Carroll, calls "art-emotion" (Carroll, 1990); to exercise a willing suspension of disbelief, as Coleridge requires; to behave as if these fictional constructs are real while knowing them to be puppets of the author, designer, director.

To extend this further, why should part of the construct not be the psychological motivations of the character, especially in a play whose dialogue so explicitly refers to these states? "A dagger of the mind" (Act 2, sc. 1); "For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind" (Act 3, scene 1); "O full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife" (Act 3, Scene 2).

How such understandings might be developed using other tools in the pedagogic toolkit is a subject for other studies: how language can be teased apart in textual play; how narrative and the narrative function of character can be explored through film-making, through drama conventions and role-play; how the spoken word can be used to lift the text from the page; even how the expository essay can construct such interpretations.

In the case of these game designs, certain specific features are evident. Firstly, the characters are actually constructed – in various ways. The witches have been selected from a library of characters: they could have been male or female, monstrous or human, beautiful or ugly, peasant or noble, old or young, black or white, different or identical. The act of semiotic substitution from a paradigm set is a construction of character in a transparent way, much more obvious than the making of such choices in drama, for example, where the real bodies in play make construction less visible. In Tom and Millie's game, the witches have been made as identical figures, the eeriness of this enhanced by the students' selection of a "spectral" setting from the character properties menu.

[FIGURE 2]

Secondly, they have chosen a first-person perspective for the player character, as Macbeth. They could have chosen a third person perspective and represented the player as a visible

avatar (again with a range of design options); but have selected first person. We only ever see the player's hands in combat. These structures of person, or point-of-view, in games provide rich opportunities for students' understanding of narrative point-of-view, especially if conducted across different media. Anthony Partington describes, for example, how his Year 8 class grappled with complex ideas of point-of-view and focalisation (Genette, 1980) by exploring Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets across book, film and videogame (Partington and Buckingham, 2011).

In Tom and Millie's case, the character as a visual construct is really a vehicle here for physical navigation of the narrative pathways, for activation of the dynamic objects, their messages and their properties, and for anchorage of these psychological conditions.

Thirdly, as we have seen, emotions are attributed to the player-character in complex ways, and constructed through messages and through ludic experiences, charged with their own dramatic intensity. The students have effectively answered a longstanding debate about emotions in videogames, sometimes popularly imagined to be difficult to achieve, or simply missing in character-constructs often assumed simply to be combat machines. There are various ripostes to this conception, such as Aleks Krotoski's answer citing the outpouring of emotion by fans of Final Fantasy VII at the death of one beloved character (2006); or the construction of fear and mistrust among a commando group in The Thing (Carr et al, 2006). In this case, Tom and Millie have made emotion and motivation a central feature of their design, and their game reminds the player-character of their emotional state.

The characters, both player-character and NPCs, are then self-evidently constructed through a series of multimodal choices. At the same time, however, they are experienced dramatically. The immersive nature of the game, the temporal determinants inciting the player to action (the witches start moving towards the corridors immediately at the start of the game, for instance), and the challenges posed by objects, popups, barriers and choices, make the experience of playing the familiar blend of dramatic (narrative) and ludic experience, recognised as the ideal balance since the start of the notorious narratology-ludology debate in game studies (eg, Frasca, 1999).

A close scrutiny of the design and production of Tom and Millie's game, then, reveals the complexity of their *transformation* (rather than *adaptation*) of Shakespeare's text. For the English teacher, a moot point is, of course, whether the value of these complex understandings lies in the game design itself, or in the talk which accompanies and follows it. The discourse of the students is as revealing as their game design. Millie's repeated references to signification and symbolism are explicit indications of a secure grasp of the semiotic processes they have undertaken. Tom's explication of Macbeth's "thought process" indicates a sophisticated grasp of the instability and ambiguity of the prophecies. Furthermore, in his effort to convey their intention, an urgency informs his speech, marked by intensifying terms ("massive", "bloodlust") and the curious possessive pronoun attaching Macbeth to the king ("his good king"); all of which has the effect of dramatizing the game sequence afresh through the mode of spoken language.

> cos if he thinks about the positives of him becoming king from what the witches tell him then he'll end up with massive ambition, and if he thinks about killing, the death of his good king, he might become fearful and therefore like end up withdrawn and

> end up having to stab the king because his wife tells him to, or if he goes to the right he might have a bloodlust and end up killing the king just because why not?

Finally, we might hope that re-designing literary texts as games may reveal that such texts were themselves playful or even game-like in the first place. The discussion of game-like literature has its own critical history. The most circumscribed strand of this (eg Bruss, 1977) has focused on literary texts which are self-evidently disruptive, playing games with conventions of their cultural moment, the usual suspects being Sterne's Tristram Shandy, Alice books, and the great avant-gardistes of late modernity, Beckett, Joyce, the OULIPO movement.

However, there is a good case for exploring how any fiction may be in some sense playful or game-like. Different cases can be made. In the case of archaic narratives whose origins lie in oral narrative, such as Beowulf, Gawain, or the Robin Hood ballads, a case can be advanced that the oral formulaic process (Parry, 1930; Lord, 1960) is not dissimilar to the processes of digital game design and play. Both are built around moveable units which can be re-ordered depending on the interests of the storyteller and audience. If digital games build algorithms to develop narrative possibilities, so in a sense does oral narrative, except that the narrative algorithm and its mobile constituent units are built from language (and performance) rather than digital code. Both forms involve roleplay, improvisation, repetition and redundancy, and the strong character types which Ong's 'psychodynamics' of oral narrative term "heavy heroes" (Ong, 1982).

Rather differently, dramatic literature is playlike initially because it is, literally, made up of plays. These dramatic entities resemble games in many ways: they build fictional worlds in space and time, they involve dramatic action with which the spectator in invoted in various ways to engage with. They address the audience from time to time in a second person mode, sometimes explicitly, as in Prospero's invitation to the audience to send his ship to Milan at the end of The Tempest; and so resemble what Astrid Ensslin calls the "textual you" mode of digital games, embedded in most videogame interfaces (Ensslin, 2014).

This more general case for the playful nature of literature is made succinctly by the great play theorist Johan Huizinga, who associates play with poeisis, the essential function of poetry:

> The affinity between poetry and play is not external only; it is also apparent in the structure of creative imagination itself. In the turning of a poetic phrase, the development of a motif, the expression of a mood, there is always a play-element at work. Whether in myth or the lyric, drama or epic, the legends of a remote past or a modern novel, the writer's aim, conscious or unconscious, is to create a tension that will 'enchant' the reader and hold him spellbound. (Huizinga, 1938)

This profound association, which connects the wordplay, sturcture and affective experience of poetic language with the function of play in human beings, has extensive implications for both English and Media education. It indicates new ways in which they might together approach questions of narrative, fiction, textuality, and the very processes of reading and writing within an expandede, multimodal conception of literacy and literature.

CONCLUSION

English and Media Education, then, belong together. They need each other – they serve as correctives to each other's prejudices, restrictions of scope, intellectual limitations. The wider case has been made many times. This chapter has focused on two specific aspects of the question: how oracy can be seen as a characteristic of both English and Media education, and can be best served by a conjunction of their pedagogies; and how literary narrative can be differently interpreted though the lens of digital game creation. While these are specific instances, they address central issues in both Media and English education, perhaps best encapsulated by the idea of rhetoric. Whether in the service of persuasive intention, as in advertising, or of narrative enchantment, as in ludo-literary narrative, the aim of English and Media educators is to position the learner as rhetor: to equip young people with the resources to persuade and enchant, and to critically interrogate the enchantment and persuasion of others. These resources are necessarily multimodal: they span spoken and written language, dramatic action, visual design; they traverse and connect the disparate cultural forms of contemporary and historic communication. English and media teachers owe it to their students to make common cause: to embrace models of literacy which collapse the boundaries of elite and popular culture, of today's and yesterday's cultural moment, of the meaning and structure of texts, of the lexico-grammar of language and the equivalent structures in other media. This is best achieved together: and perhaps a renewed integration of the elements of English, Media and Drama as only a beginning, signalling future collaborations across the Arts in education, and indeed crossing the Arts-Science divide to explore with computing in education what it might mean for videogames to code Shakespeare.

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